

Falcons United

U12 Rec Player Development Curriculum

U12 Rec is a **bridge age**. The goal is **development + confidence + competence**, not competition for results.

Players should leave the season:

- More comfortable with the ball
 - More aware of the game
 - More excited to keep playing
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Program Overview

Age Group: U12 Rec

Primary Objective: Develop confident players who can perform real soccer actions

Session Length: 75 Minutes

Season Length: 10 Weeks

Game Format: Age-appropriate (small-sided in training, match play as assigned)

U12 Rec Coaching Philosophy

U12 Rec is about:

- Comfort on the ball
- Confidence in 1v1 moments
- Simple decision-making
- Real game actions (not cone choreography)
- Fun, respectful environment

U12 Rec is NOT about:

- Pressing systems
 - Positional specialization
 - Tactical overload
 - Limited-touch rules
 - Win-at-all-cost mentality
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Top 10 Skills for U12 Rec Players

1. First Touch (With Time & Space)

- Controlling the ball cleanly
- Using inside and outside of the foot
- Preparing the ball for the next action

No pressure yet — just **quality contact**.

2. Dribbling With Purpose

- Keeping the ball close
- Changing direction
- Using moves to escape, not just show off

Encourage creativity and confidence.

3. Passing Accuracy

- Inside-of-the-foot passing
- Passing to a teammate's feet
- Proper weight on the ball

Passing to **connect**, not to clear.

4. Receiving & Turning

- Receive and turn away from pressure
- Simple turns (inside turn, outside turn)
- Facing forward when possible

This is intro-level game awareness.

5. Shooting Technique

- Proper striking technique
- Accuracy before power
- Shooting with both feet (basic level)

Goals build confidence.

6. Basic Defending

- Getting between ball and goal
- Staying balanced
- Knowing when to slow an attacker

Effort and positioning over tactics.

7. 1v1 Confidence (Attack & Defend)

Focus moves:

- Body feints
- Scissors
- Sole roll
- Croqueta

Key behaviors:

- Taking players on
- Not being afraid to defend
- Competing fairly

Individual courage matters at this age.

8. Spacing & Movement

- Not crowding the ball
- Finding open space
- Supporting teammates

Simple concepts — no positional lectures.

9. Fitness Through Play

- Running with and without the ball
- Building endurance naturally
- Recovering and re-engaging

Soccer fitness, not conditioning drills.

10. Sportsmanship & Teamwork

- Encouraging teammates
- Respecting referees
- Handling wins and losses properly

This skill lasts longer than any goal.

Top U12 Rec Training Activities

These drills build confidence, skill, and decision-making with real game transfer.

1. Free Dribble → Command Moves

Focus: Ball mastery + confidence

Setup: Players dribble freely; coach calls moves (inside cut, outside cut, pull-back)

Coaching Cues: “Soft touches” • “Head up”

2. Dribble + Escape Grid

Focus: Dribbling under light pressure

Setup: Players dribble while passive defenders apply pressure

Coaching Cues: “Protect the ball” • “Change direction”

3. Passing Gates (Progressed)

Focus: Passing accuracy + movement

Setup: Pass through gates, then move to a new one

Coaching Cues: “Pass and move” • “Weight of pass”

4. Receive, Turn, Pass

Focus: First touch + turning

Setup: Player receives, turns away from cone/defender, then passes

Coaching Cues: "Open your body" • "Turn into space"

5. 1v1 to Mini Goals

Focus: Attacking confidence

Setup: Beat defender and score on small goals

Coaching Cues: "Change speed" • "Attack the defender"

6. 2v1 Decision Game

Focus: Decision-making (pass vs dribble)

Setup: Two attackers vs one defender toward goal

Coaching Cues: "Use the extra player" • "Timing"

7. Defend & Delay

Focus: Basic defending

Setup: Defender slows attacker for 5 seconds

Coaching Cues: "Stay balanced" • "Show wide"

8. Shooting After a Move

Focus: Finishing technique

Setup: Dribble → move → shot

Coaching Cues: "Accuracy first" • "Follow your shot"

9. 3v3 or 4v4 Directional Play

Focus: Team play + spacing
Setup: Small-sided games to goals
Coaching Cues: “Find space” • “Help your teammate”

10. Scrimmage with ONE Simple Constraint

Focus: Game understanding (without overload)
Examples:

- Bonus goal for a pass before scoring
- Goal only counts from inside the box
- Bonus point for a successful dribble

Keep it simple.

Practice Structure (Every Week)

10–15 minutes — Warm-up (with ball)
20 minutes — Skill activity
20 minutes — Game action
20–25 minutes — Scrimmage
5 minutes — Cool down + encouragement

U12 Rec Season Curriculum (Week-by-Week)

Week 1 — Ball Comfort & Confidence

Theme: Get comfortable, get touches, get confident

Warm-Up

- Free Dribble → Command Moves

Skill Block

- Passing Gates (Progressed)

Game Action

- 3v3 or 4v4 Directional Play

Scrimmage

- Free play (no conditions)

Coaching Focus

“Be brave on the ball” • “Mistakes are okay”

Week 2 — Dribbling With Purpose

Theme: Dribble to escape, not just to run

Warm-Up

- Free Dribble → Command Moves

Skill Block

- Dribble + Escape Grid

Game Action

- 1v1 to Mini Goals

Scrimmage

- Bonus point for a successful dribble

Coaching Focus

“Change speed” • “Protect the ball”

Week 3 — Passing & Movement

Theme: Share the ball and move

Warm-Up

- Passing Gates (Progressed)

Skill Block

- Receive, Turn, Pass

Game Action

- 3v3 Directional Play

Scrimmage

- Goal only counts after a pass

Coaching Focus

“Pass and move” • “Help your teammate”

Week 4 — Receiving & Turning

Theme: Face forward and play

Warm-Up

- Free Dribble → Turns on command

Skill Block

- Receive, Turn, Pass (both sides)

Game Action

- 2v1 Decision Game

Scrimmage

- Encourage turning before passing

Coaching Focus

“Open your body” • “Turn into space”

Week 5 — Attacking Confidence (Mid-Season)

Theme: Be confident attacking defenders

Warm-Up

- Dribble + Escape Grid

Skill Block

- 1v1 to Mini Goals

Game Action

- 2v1 Decision Game

Scrimmage

- Bonus goal for beating a defender

Coaching Focus

“Attack with confidence” • “Change speed”

Week 6 — Basic Defending

Theme: Defend with patience and effort

Warm-Up

- Partner shadowing (no tackling)

Skill Block

- Defend & Delay

Game Action

- 1v1 to Mini Goals (defender counterattacks)

Scrimmage

- Praise good defending, not just goals

Coaching Focus

“Stay balanced” • “Slow them down”

Week 7 — Shooting & Finishing

Theme: Accuracy before power

Warm-Up

- Passing + movement

Skill Block

- Shooting After a Move

Game Action

- 2v1 to goal

Scrimmage

- Goal only counts if shot is inside the box

Coaching Focus

“Pick a spot” • “Stay calm”

Week 8 — Team Play & Spacing

Theme: Play together

Warm-Up

- Passing Gates (Progressed)

Skill Block

- 3v3 or 4v4 Directional Play

Game Action

- Small-sided game emphasizing spacing

Scrimmage

- Bonus goal for an assist

Coaching Focus

“Find space” • “Support the ball”

Week 9 — Putting It Together

Theme: Confidence + teamwork

Warm-Up

- Free Dribble → Moves

Skill Block

- Player-choice favorite drill

Game Action

- 4v4 or 5v5

Scrimmage

- Light constraint (one pass OR one dribble before goal)

Coaching Focus

“Play with confidence” • “Play together”

Week 10 — Celebration & Play

Theme: Love the game

Warm-Up

- Fun technical warm-up

Skill Block

- Shooting After a Move

Game Action

- Tournament-style small-sided games

Scrimmage

- Free play

Wrap-Up

- Celebrate improvement
- Positive feedback for every player

Coaching Focus
“Have fun” • “Be proud”

U12 → U13 Classic Transition Season

Season Objective

Prepare players to succeed in U13 Classic by introducing:

- Speed of play
- Decision-making under pressure
- Basic team concepts
- Accountability and effort standards

WITHOUT:

- Overloading tactics
 - Locking positions
 - Burning kids out
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Top 10 Drills for U12 → U13 Transition

These are intentional Classic-prep drills, not Rec games.

1. Rondos (4v1 → 4v2)
Focus: First touch, scanning, composure (add touch limits later)
2. Directional Rondo
Focus: Playing forward, breaking pressure
3. Receive on the Half Turn
Focus: Body shape and awareness
4. 2v1 → 3v2 Attacking Game
Focus: Decision-making and timing
5. Transition Game (Win It → Go)
Focus: Reaction speed
6. 1v1 Attacking & Defending
Focus: Confidence + accountability

7. Combination Play (Pass → Move → Finish)
Focus: Give-and-go, overlaps
 8. Numbers-Up / Numbers-Down Game
Focus: Exploiting overloads
 9. Pressing Awareness Game
Focus: Team defending and triggers
 10. Conditioned Small-Sided Game (5v5 / 6v6)
Focus: Everything (speed, decisions, habits)
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10-Week U12 → U13 Transition Curriculum

Week 1 — Playing Faster

Theme: Speed of thought

- Rondos (4v1)
 - Receive on the half turn
 - Free small-sided game
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Week 2 — Playing Under Pressure

Theme: Composure

- Rondos (4v2)
 - Directional rondo
 - 5v5 game
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Week 3 — Decision Making

Theme: Pass vs dribble

- 2v1 attacking
 - 3v2 progression
 - Conditioned game (must decide quickly)
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Week 4 — Attacking Confidence

Theme: Be brave

- 1v1 attacking
 - Combination play
 - Finish under pressure
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Week 5 — Midseason Reality Check

Theme: Compete

- Transition game
 - Numbers-up game
 - Game with scoring incentives
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Week 6 — Defending & Recovery

Theme: Responsibility

- 1v1 defending
 - Pressing awareness game
 - Transition defending
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Week 7 — Team Shape (Light)

Theme: Spacing and roles

- Positional possession (zones + rotation)
 - Directional play
 - 6v6 game
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Week 8 — Connecting the Team

Theme: Play together

- Combination play
- Overlaps + support
- Bonus-goal scrimmage for assists

Week 9 — Classic Simulation

Theme: Match realism

- Rondos + transitions
 - Conditioned game (touch limits)
 - Competitive scrimmage
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Week 10 — U13 Readiness

Theme: Are you ready?

- Player-led rondos
 - Game with Classic-style rules
 - Intro to the regulation field (differences explained)
 - Honest feedback + expectations talk
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What Players Should Leave With

By the end of this season, players should:

- Be comfortable under pressure
- Understand spacing and movement
- React quickly in transitions
- Accept coaching and accountability
- Compete without fear
- Be mentally ready for U13 Classic